

Furthermore, to a learner Arya's exalted wisdom of subsequent attainment that realizes emptiness conceptually, a conventional truth appears because the generic image of emptiness appears. When the generic image of emptiness appears a conventional truth necessarily appears because the generic image of emptiness is a conventional truth.

Exalted wisdoms of subsequent attainment are called "exalted wisdoms of *subsequent attainment*" because they are *attainments* that are generated *subsequent* to meditative equipoise. For instance, the first path of seeing in a Bodhisattva's continuum is an exalted wisdom of meditative equipoise (that newly realizes emptiness directly). When the Bodhisattva arises from that meditative equipoise, the path of seeing in his or her continuum becomes an exalted wisdom of subsequent attainment. Therefore, even love, compassion, Bodhicitta etc. in the continua of Arya beings (though they are not wisdoms) are *exalted wisdoms* of subsequent attainment.

Hence, sentient beings and more specifically learner Aryas can realize the two truths directly and explicitly only in alternation. This is why in learner Aryas' continua the exalted wisdom of meditative equipoise and the exalted wisdom of subsequent attainment arise also only in alternation. Bodhisattvas, for example, realize ultimate truths directly and explicitly with the exalted wisdom of meditative equipoise, and they realize conventional truths directly and explicitly with the exalted wisdom of subsequent attainment.

Buddhas, on the other hand, are omniscient; they realize all phenomena of the three times (present, past and future), and in this way the conventional and the ultimate truths, simultaneously. Therefore, the omniscient minds (exalted knowers) of Buddhas are both, exalted wisdoms of meditative equipoise and exalted wisdoms of subsequent attainment. In fact, *in a Buddha's mental continuum* the two are equivalent. Whatever is an exalted wisdom of meditative equipoise is necessarily an exalted wisdom of subsequent attainment, and whatever is an exalted wisdom of subsequent attainment is necessarily an exalted wisdom of meditative equipoise.

THE WAY IN WHICH, RELATIVE TO ORDINARY BEINGS AND ARYAS, [PHENOMENA] ARE ULTIMATE AND CONVENTIONAL

Chandrakirti says in his *Auto-commentary on the Supplement to the Middle Way*:

[A phenomenon] that is ultimate for ordinary beings, is itself a mere conventionality for Aryas who possess spheres of experience within which [dualistic] appearances are present. [That phenomenon's] emptiness of inherent existence is ultimate for [those Aryas].

The meaning of the former part of this passage is that a phenomenon such as a pot exists ultimately for ordinary beings whereas for Aryas the pot is a mere conventionality. More specifically, here the Aryas for whom the pot is a mere conventionality refers to Aryas who have arisen from meditative equipoise (realizing emptiness directly) and in whose continua are the dualistic awarenesses of subsequent attainment. As explained previously, the word "mere" (of "mere conventionality") does not eliminate conventional truth but truth.

The meaning of the latter part of this passage is that the emptiness of a dependently arisen conventional phenomenon is an ultimate truth for Aryas.

However, this does not mean that the pot is a conventional truth relative to ordinary beings and an ultimate truth relative to Aryas. Asserting this would mean that the two truths are not directly contradictory and that when a mind realizes that the pot is a conventional truth that mind does not realize that the pot is not an ultimate truth because the pot would be both, conventional and ultimate truth.

EXPLANATION OF THE ULTIMATE TRUTH - THE MEANING OF THE ROOT VERSE

Chandrakirti says in the *Supplement to the Middle Way*:

*Through the force of cataract, distorted entities,
Such as falling hair and so forth, are imputed.
What is reality is seen by the one with clear eyes;
Likewise understand [this to be the case] in this context.*

Chandrakirti says in his ***Auto-commentary on the Supplement to the Middle Way***:

Those with cataract erroneously see entities such as falling hairs and so on. Even though those without cataract may point out [that there are no falling hairs, those with cataract] are incapable of cognizing reality as it is, that is, they are incapable of not seeing hairs in the same way that those [people] who are free of cataract [do not see hairs].

Chandrakirti explains with the help of an analogy how ultimate truths are perceived by those who are free from the *imprints* of the ignorance that apprehends true existence. The analogy is of two people who are looking at a vessel in front of them. One of them is suffering from an eye disease such as cataract which induces the appearance of falling hairs. This appearance causes him to repeatedly overturn the vessel in order to remove the hairs. The other person is free from that disease and thus free from such appearance. Since he is not affected by the disease he is able to see what is actually there, i.e. the *emptiness* or the *absence* of falling hairs.

Furthermore, even though the person who suffers from the eye disease may eventually be able to realize the emptiness or the absence of falling hairs (with a mental consciousness), he is not be able to experience the vessel in front of him in the way the person free from the eye disease does.

In a similar way, when sentient beings and Buddhas look at conventional truths such as the aggregates, to sentient beings' awarenesses the aggregates' inherent existence appears whereas to Buddhas' omniscient minds the aggregates' *emptiness* of inherent existence appears. The reason for this is that Buddhas are free from afflictive and cognitive obscurations and thus free from any kind of mistaken appearance. Moreover, though sentient beings are able to *directly* realize the aggregates' emptiness of inherent existence (with their mental consciousness), they are not able to experience the aggregates in the same way Buddhas do. When Buddhas look at the aggregates they see "the aggregates' emptiness by way of not seeing the aggregates".

Chandrakirti says in his ***Auto-commentary on the Supplement to the Middle Way***:

The one without eye disease sees the suchness of the falling hairs; the other does not. Similarly, the entities of the aggregates, elements, sense-spheres and so forth that are observed by those who, through being affected by the eye disease of ignorance, do not see suchness, are the conventional entities of those [phenomena]. Their ultimate truth is that which the Blessed Ones, who are free from the imprints of ignorance, see through seeing the [ultimate] nature of those very aggregates and so forth, in the way that one who does not have an eye disease sees falling hairs.

[Question:] Would not [an ultimate] nature with an aspect like that be quite impossible to see?

[Answer:] True. However, they see by way of not seeing.

This passage means that Buddhas see the ultimate nature of the aggregates by way of not seeing conventional truths (the aggregates), i.e. they directly realize the aggregates' emptiness of inherent existence by way of a vanishing of the appearance of conventional truths. Therefore, "seeing by way of not seeing" is not a contradiction because that which is seen (the aggregates' emptiness of inherent existence: ultimate truth) and that which is not seen (the aggregates: conventional truth) are different.

DISPELLING OBJECTIONS [AGAINST THE PREVIOUS EXPLANATION]

In this section of Lama Tsongkhapa's text someone expresses an objection against the explanation given in the previous section. The objection is: "It is not correct to say that just as the eye consciousness which is not tainted by an eye disease does not perceive the appearance of falling hair, Buddhas realize ultimate truths by way of a vanishing of the appearance of conventional truths. If Buddhas realize ultimate truths in this way, conventional truths would be non-existent because whatever exists necessarily appears to Buddhas' awarenesses and is thus cognized by them."

Lama Tsongkhapa's reply is that there is no fault with saying that Buddhas realize ultimate truths within a vanishing of all dualistic conventional appearances. The reason for this is that every instant, Buddhas' awarenesses non-conceptually realize all ultimate truths by way of a vanishing of the appearance of conventional truths and simultaneously non-conceptually realize all conventional truths by way of the appearing of conventional truths. Therefore, Buddhas' minds realize ultimate truths by way of a vanishing of dualistic appearances, i.e. they realize ultimate truths non-dualistically. At the same time, they realize conventional truths by way of an association with dualistic appearances.

